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(54) Hospital bed for weighing patients.

(57) A weigh apparatus, preferably part of a hospital bed, has a support frame (16) and a weigh frame (30) mounted on the support frame by load cells (35). Means (58,60) for monitoring changes in weight is provided. The output of the load cells is summed to provide a reading of the total weight on the weigh frame. The tare weight is subtracted to provide the weight of the load, e.g. the patient.

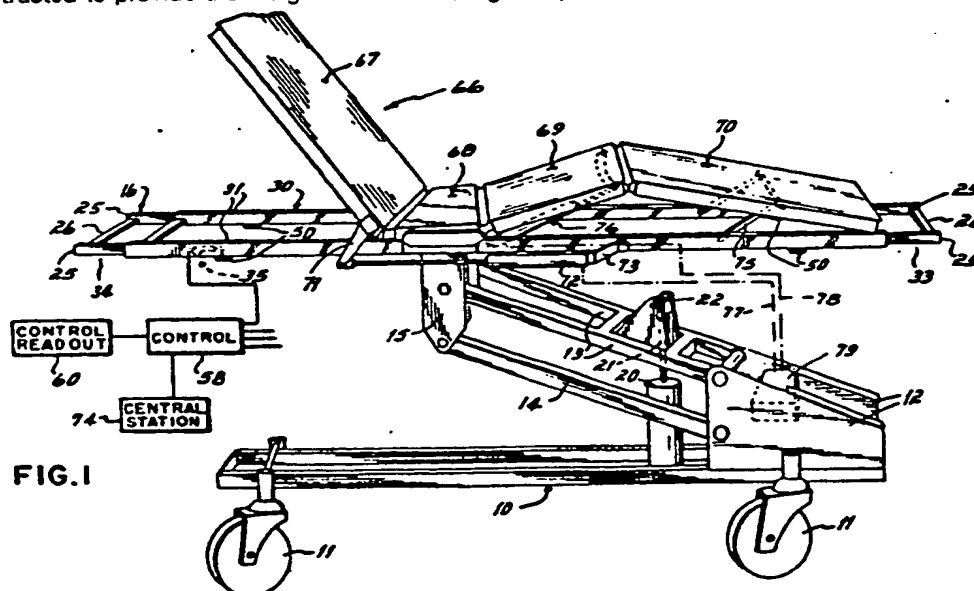


FIG.1

EP 0 322 994 A2

HOSPITAL BED FOR WEIGHING PATIENTS.

This invention relates to a weigh apparatus, e.g. a hospital bed, and more particularly to a hospital bed having the capability of measuring and maintaining a record of a patient's weight as well as changes in the patient's weight.

The invention will be described by reference to a hospital bed but it is to be understood that it relates more generally to weigh apparatus.

The bed of the present invention has its principal use in intensive care or critical care units of a hospital. There, it is necessary to monitor vital functions of a patient on a regular basis. Some must be monitored continuously. One of the vital functions that must be measured on a regular basis is the patient's weight.

Since the patient's health is in such a state that the patient is required to be in intensive or critical care, it is highly likely that the patient cannot leave the bed for a weight measurement and that the patient probably should not be subjected to the trauma attending moving the patient to some sort of scale.

Patient weighing has been done in various ways. A cumbersome sling overlying the bed has been provided, and it has been necessary to move the patient onto the sling and to lift the patient, by means of the sling, off the bed to effect the weighing operation.

Thin weighing scales adapted to be slid under the patient have been disclosed. See U. S. patents Nos. 3,217,818 and 3,463,368.

A weigh system forming part of a bed assembly has been disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 4,015,677. Since there is practically no bed structure disclosed, it is assumed that the total bed and patient are weighed.

It is known that Stryker Corp. of Kalamazoo, Michigan is marketing a bed having a weight monitoring capability, but not much is known about how the weighing is accomplished. The literature indicates that there are provisions for changing tare to accommodate things added or taken from the bed. Aside from the background art heretofore disclosed, there is little art relating to weigh beds.

The present invention provides an improved weigh bed having the following features:

A weigh frame that contains the patient supporting surface is mounted at its four corners by load cells to a bed support frame. The weight from the four load cells is summed, as will be described below.

Each load cell is fixed at one end to the support frame and at the other to the weigh frame by universal swivels having upper and lower ball joints. Thus, the weigh frame "floats" with respect to the support frame and does not bind, thereby eliminating possible error in the weighing function.

The weigh frame is an inverted U that telescopes over a support frame that is preferably formed of a hollow rectangular section tube. The depending legs of the inverted U provide points of attachment for the connection of the weigh frame to the swivel joint and thus to the support frame. The relationship of inverted U weigh frame and the rectangular tube support frame provides freedom of vertical movement of the weigh frame while restricting horizontal or lateral movement, thus providing a stable support of the weighing assembly with respect to the support frame and lower bed structure.

A four panel patient support surface is mounted entirely on the weigh frame. Pistons and cylinders connect the support surface to the weigh frame to permit normal articulation of the four panels to permit the patient to assume the conventional reclining and sitting attitudes associated with hospital beds. The system for providing pressure to the pistons and cylinders is mounted on the lower base frame and does not form a part of the weight applied to the load cells, with flexible hoses being provided to connect the pressure system to the pistons and cylinders that operate the patient support surface.

The support frame projects at both of its ends beyond the weigh frame. The projecting portions of the support frame carry accessories such as infusion pumps, I.V. bags, drainage bags, head and footboards and the like. By mounting those accessories on the support frame, the adjustments of tare are minimized and the monitoring of the patient's weight is more accurate. For example, with the drainage bag off the weigh frame, the loss of fluids by discharge from the patient into the drainage bag is accurately reflected in loss of patient's weight. Similarly, by mounting the I.V. bag off the weigh frame, increases in the patient's weight by virtue of the introduction of the I.V. fluids is accurately monitored.

The invention provides for changes in tare even when the incremental change in tare is unknown. The invention provides alarm options including an alarm at a remote location such as a nurse's station, an illuminated alarm, an audible alarm and no alarm. The alarms provide notification of the patient's exit from the bed, which is particularly useful for patients whose acuity is impaired. The patient's loss or gain of a predetermined amount of weight can be programmed to operate the alarm. The invention provides for displaying of weight in either pound units or kilogram units. All of the controls for the scale may be battery-operated and the weight control system provides, on its display, an indicator for low battery supply.

The several features of the invention will become more readily apparent from the following detailed description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings in which:

- Fig. 1 is a perspective view of a bed employing the present invention;
- Fig. 2 is a perspective view of the support frame and weigh frame combination;
- 5 Fig. 3 is a cross-sectional view taken along lines 3-3 of Fig. 2;
- Fig. 4 is a cross-sectional view taken along lines 4-4 of Fig. 2; and
- Fig. 5 is a plan view of the display for the control/readout unit associated with the weigh scale.

The bed to which the present invention is applied is shown in Fig. 1. That bed is more fully described and claimed in copending application Serial No. 7-034,232, filed April 2, 1987. The details of that disclosure are incorporated herein by reference but, except as indicated, do not form a part of the present invention.

The bed has a base frame 10 that is supported on casters 11. Bosses 12 fixed to the base frame pivotally support the ends of a cantilevered support arm 13 and a stabilizer arm 14. The ends of the cantilevered support arms 13 and the stabilizer arm 14 are pivotally connected to a bracket 15, thereby providing a parallelogram linkage support for the bed. The bracket 15 is bolted to support frame 16. A piston and cylinder 20 driving a piston rod 21 is mounted on the base frame 10 with the piston rod 21 being connected to the support arm 13 by means of a clevis mount 22. Actuation of the piston and cylinder 20 causes the piston rod 21 to extend and contract, thereby raising and lowering the parallelogram linkage and the support frame 16 of the bed.

Referring to Figs. 1-4, the support frame 16 consists of two tubular rectangular section beams 25 joined together by transverse bars 26 mounted at each end of the beams 25. A weigh frame 30 is mounted on the support frame 16. The weigh frame consists of two inverted U-shaped beams 31 that are shorter than the rectangular beams of the support frame. The rectangular beams of the support frame are nested within the U-shaped beams of the weigh frame with front and rear portions 33 and 34 of the support beam projecting beyond the weigh frame 30.

At each corner of the weigh frame 30, the weigh frame is supported on the support frame by a load cell 35. The load cell is an elongated element 36, containing a strain gauge, not shown, and having a boss 37 connected by bolts 38 to the inside of the rectangular beam 25. Thus, the major portion of the load cell is cantilevered from the boss 37 presenting a free end 39. The free end 39 is connected to a swivel 40 by means of a bolt 41 threaded into the free end 39 of the load cell. The projecting end or head of the bolt 41 is a ball 42. The ball sits in a housing 43 to form a ball joint. The housing has a female thread 44 that is connected to a male thread 45 on a second housing 46. The second housing 46 receives a ball 47 to form a second ball joint. The ball 47 is mounted on a pin 48 that is secured to a clevis mount 49 on a bracket 50.

At each corner of the weigh frame flanges 55 project laterally. The brackets 50 are bolted to said flanges 55 across the open end of the U-shaped beams 31. Thus, each swivel mounting securely connects the free end of the load cell to the weigh beam 31. The swivel connection permits limited universal movement of the weigh frame in the horizontal direction, thereby preventing any binding of the weigh frame with respect to the support frame. Preferably, a set screw 56 is provided in free end 39 to limit the movement of the load cell in a downward direction while permitting the load cell to be stressed to the point of reflecting a weigh level well beyond the expected loading of the corner of the weigh frame, thereby preventing damage to the load cell. The load cell is provided with suitable strain gauges configured into a Wheatstone bridge as is conventional. The strain gauges are connected to a computerized control 58 which in turn is connected to a control/readout unit 60, to be described more fully below. The output of the strain gauges are read sequentially and then summed to provide the total weight on the weigh frame.

The weigh frame has two laterally-projecting brackets 65. A patient support 66 having a head panel 67, a seat panel 68, a thigh panel 69 and a foot panel 70 is secured by means of the seat panel to the brackets 65 and, hence, to the weigh frame. The head panel 67 is hinged to the seat panel 68 and is connected by a bracket 71 to a piston and cylinder 72 which is secured to a bracket 73 on the weigh frame. Thus, the piston and cylinder 72 on the weigh frame causes the raising and lowering of the head panel 67.

The foot panel 70 is pivotally connected to a bracket 75 which is pivoted to the weigh frame. The foot panel is hinged to the thigh panel 69 which is in turn pivoted to the seat panel. A piston and cylinder 76 connects the thigh panel to the weigh frame. The pistons and cylinders 72 and 76 are connected by hoses, diagrammatically indicated at 77 and 78, to a hydraulic system 79 mounted on the base frame. The manipulation of the panels of the patient support and manipulation of the support frame are all performed in a manner as described in said copending application Serial No. 7-034,232 and forms no part of the present invention except to note the pistons and cylinders for operating the patient support panels are mounted on the weigh frame and become a part of its tare whereas the hydraulic system including pump and fluid reservoir is mounted on the main frame with only hoses being connected between the two. It should be

understood that the manipulation of said panels could be performed using electric motors mounted on the weigh frame and a power source mounted on the base, with conductors connecting the power source to the weigh frame.

The portions 33 and 34 of the support frame that project beyond the weigh frame provide elements directly connected to the main frame for supporting accessories such as infusion pumps, I.V. bags, drainage bags, headboards and the like. All of those accessory elements are thus supported separately from the weigh frame and the weighing system.

The bed as thus described will be outfitted with a mattress, sheets, pillows, blankets, and the like. These items become part of the tare. When these are varied, as by adding a blanket or removing pillow, the tare can be changed, whether the weight of the items be known or unknown, by following an easy sequence of steps on the control/readout unit 60. Further, an attendant can set the controls to provide an alarm, visual or audible, to warn an attendant that the patient has lost or gained weight beyond predetermined limit, or that the patient has left the bed. Since IV bags and drainage bags are supported on the support frame 16 and/or bracket 15 and are thus out of the weighing system, losses from the IV bags and gains in the drainage bag do not influence the determination of the patient's true weight.

The alarm is adapted to be connected to a central nurse station 74 so as to initiate an immediate response to an emergency situation such as a patient's falling or climbing out of bed; or a delayed response for weight gain or loss beyond the pre-set limit.

The control/readout unit 60 is preferably mounted on the front or foot end of the bed convenient for reading and manipulating by the attendant.

The panel has a liquid crystal display 80 that will display the numbers indicating the weight and will display the weight units as KG or LB. The units, KG or LB, are set by the units key 81. The display will also show one of four modes: OFF, EXIT, WEIGHT (+), WEIGHT (-). The monitoring mode is selected by mode key 82. The display will also show the alarm which is one of three alternatives: silent, local, remote. The alarm condition is determined by the alarm key 83. Four digits are displayed to reflect weight. These digits are controlled by four digit stepping keys: 85 for tenths, 86 for units, 87 for tens and 88 for hundreds. The hundreds key sequences the display through 0, 100, 200, 300, 400, -400, -300, -200, -100, -0, +0. Thus, by proper sequencing of the hundreds key, the units can be changed from plus to minus.

A read key 90 is provided to activate a weight reading. A zero key 91 is provided to activate a tare reading or effect tare adjustments and a set key 92 is provided to activate monitoring controls. The key functions are set forth more particularly as follows:

READ Initiates 5 to 8 sec weight measurement upon release.

Causes display "+" and preset units, either LB or KG, as previously set, to blink upon closure and while measurement is in process.

Signals measurement display with a chime.

UNITS Always comes up in previously set units.

Alternately displays in LB or KG upon contact closure.

Freezes display when activated and held during weight display.

Resets 10 sec. display-hold-timer upon contact opening.

ZERO Initiates automatic zero-tare of empty bed when held while touching READ.

*Activates digit stepping keys for entry of known tare change, plus or minus, when held.

*Increments total tare value by difference between display and memory, when activated and held during display while then touching READ.

Recalls total system tare value when activated and held; displays for 10 sec after release, or until cancelled by READ or SET.

*All tare operations are protected from accidental change by dual-key or sequenced operation.

SET Activates display when held, to show existing alarm weight value for monitoring modes.

Activates digit stepping keys when held, to allow setting or changing existing alarm weight value.

Facilitates MODE and ALARM setup when held, by activating display when display is otherwise inactive.

Releasing SET causes display to clear.

Provides memory recall of last weight when held while activating READ.

MODE/OFF Selects monitoring mode, shown in display, and as described:

OFF: Automatically timed monitoring functions inactive.

EXIT: Rough weight measurement (+ 0, -10% accuracy) taken every 3 to 4 seconds.

Places EXIT alarm if weight falls below existing alarm-weight value for two successive readings.

WT-: Precise weight measurement ($\pm 1\%$ accuracy, $\pm 0.1\%$ repeatability) taken every 10 minutes. Places weight-loss alarm if weight falls below existing alarm-weight value for two successive readings. Last weight value is stored in memory for recall.

WT+: Precise weight measurement ($\pm 1\%$ accuracy, $\pm 0.1\%$ repeatability) taken every 10 minutes. Places weight-gain alarm if weight exceeds existing alarm-weight value for two successive readings. Last weight value is stored in memory for recall.

Cancels alarm with single touch; requires resetting, as before, to re-arm monitoring mode.

- 5 Sequences through available settings in rotation with each touch, or rolls at a 1/2 sec. rate if held for 1 sec. Skips settings that are not available due to hard-wire inhibit or programmed inhibit.

Settable any time a full display is present, that is, during weight display holding time, during total tare display holding time, or any time SET is held activated.

ALARM Selects alarm type, shown in the display, and as described:

- 10 SILENT: Flashing yellow LED on Nurse Panel Facade.

LOCAL: Flashing yellow LED plus audio beep from Nurse Panel.

REMOTE: Flashing yellow LED plus room-cancellable call with identifying audio beep transmitted through SIDECOM to nurse station.

- 15 During all alarms the preset monitoring condition (EXIT, WT-, or WT +) flashes in the display to identify the type of alarm placed.

Audio tone for EXIT is 400 Hz gated ON for $\frac{1}{2}$ sec., OFF for $\frac{1}{2}$ sec., for WT + and WT-, a 400 Hz tone gated ON for $\frac{1}{2}$ sec., OFF for $1\frac{1}{2}$ sec. The LED and DISPLAY flash at the same ON/OFF rate as the audio.

Yellow alarm LED burns steadily anytime a monitoring mode has been set; then flashes upon alarm.

- 20 Sequences through rotation from SILENT to LOCAL to REMOTE to SILENT with each touch of the key, or rolls at a $\frac{1}{2}$ second rate if held for 1 second.

Settable any time a full display is present, that is, during weight display holding time, during total tare display holding time, or anytime SET is held activated.

Alarm placement occurs within ten seconds if the set weight, when entered, is already in the alarm condition when the SET key is released. This alerts the staff while still in the room.

- 25 DIGIT KEYS Four (4) digit stepping keys, each associated with a single decade numeral of the display, are used to increment the display for ZERO and SET, when either of the latter keys are held.

Dual key activation reduces the opportunity for accidental changes in tare resulting from touching a wrong key.

- 30 Hundreds sequence is +0, +1, +2, +3, +4, -4, -3, -2, -1, -0, etc; tens, units and tenths step incrementally from 0 to 9 and then jump back to zero without a carryover into the next decade.

Digits step with each touch of the key, or roll at a $\frac{1}{2}$ second rate if held more than 1 second.

BAT Annunciator flashes in display when charge is within 5 to 15% of depletion. Scale is fully functional yet with this reserve, and meets all accuracy requirements. Automatically places a nurse call every 10 minutes when BAT display is activated.

- 35 NOTE: In tare or recall operations involving holding ZERO or SET while momentarily activating READ, there will be a tendency to release simultaneously. To prevent activation of an unintentional function when READ is released last, controls are designed such that if READ opens last, but within $\frac{1}{2}$ sec. of ZERO or SET opening, the operation will not be affected.

- 40 The steps in the various procedures for weighing the patient, changing the tare, changing the alarm, etc., are as follows:

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<u>PROCEDURE</u>	<u>STAFF ACTION</u>	<u>DISPLAY</u>	"M/A and "U" designate "MODE, ALARM and UNITS"
ZERO EMPTY BED	HOLD <u>ZERO</u>	M/A U +T.SY.T. _i	TOTAL SYSTEM TARE, INITIAL (T.SY.T. _i) is displayed as long as <u>ZERO</u> is held.
	TOUCH <u>READ</u>	M/A U +000.0	Display changes to zero to indicate procedure when <u>READ</u> closes with <u>ZERO</u> held.
	RELEASE <u>ZERO</u>	+000.0 U	Display blinks during 5-8 sec. zero tare measurement. Blinking and measurement start upon release of <u>ZERO</u> .
		CHIME	CHIME signals completion of tare measurement.
		M/A U +T.SY.T. _f HOLDS 10 sec.	TOTAL SYSTEM TARE, FINAL (T.SY.T. _f) to zero bed, is stored in memory. DISPLAY holds 10 sec. or until cancelled by <u>SET</u> or <u>READ</u> . UNITS change converts display on closure; restarts 10 sec. timer on release. MODE and <u>ALARM</u> may be set during display.

5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55
READ SYSTEM TARE	TOUCH <u>ZERO</u>	M/A U +T.SY.T. HOLDS 10 Sec.	TOTAL SYSTEM TARE is displayed upon <u>ZERO</u> closure and holds for 10 sec. after release, or until cancelled by <u>READ</u> or <u>SET</u> . <u>UNITS</u> change converts display on closure; restarts 10 sec. timer on release. <u>MODE</u> and <u>ALARM</u> may be set during display.							
INPUT <u>KNOWN</u> TARE	HOLD <u>ZERO</u> CHECK <u>UNITS</u>	M/A U +T.SY.T. ₁	TOTAL SYSTEM TARE, INITIAL is displayed upon <u>ZERO</u> closure. DISPLAY converts if <u>UNITS</u> are changed.							
INPUT EXACT TARE <u>CHANGE</u>	DIGIT STEPPING KEYS ADDED (+) OR REMOVED (-)	M/A U $\pm \Delta T$	DISPLAY numerals clear with first key entry to show ΔT input. DISPLAY increments with each key touch; rolls upward at 1 sec. per step without decade carryover if digit stepping key is held for 1 sec. Hundreds digit rolls +0, +1, +2, +3, +4, -4, -3, -2, -1, -0, etc.							
RELEASE <u>ZERO</u>	M/A U +T.SY.T. _f	TOTAL SYSTEM TARE, FINAL (T.SY.T. _f = T.SY.T. ₁ + ΔT), which includes the known tare change, $\pm \Delta T$, is displayed 10 sec. after release, or until cancelled by <u>READ</u> or <u>SET</u> . <u>UNITS</u> change converts display on closure; restarts 10 sec. timer on release.								

INPUT UNKNOWN
TARE

TOUCH READ, (OR USE
VALUE IN MEMORY
WITHOUT NECESSITY
OF RECALL)

MODE and ALARM may be set during
display.

Display blinks during 5 to 8 sec.
weight measurement. Blink starts
with READ closure; measurement,
upon release.

CHIME

CHIME signals completion of PATIENT
WEIGHT measurement.

M/A U
+P.W.
HOLDS
10 Sec.

PATIENT WEIGHT is displayed for 10
secs. or until cancelled by READ or
SET, at which time it bumps into
memory.

UNITS change converts display on
closure; restarts 10 sec. timer on
release.

MODE and ALARM may be set during
display.

CHANGE BED TARE

Time to complete equipment or bed
change is not critical.

TOUCH READ

+ U

Display blinks during 5 to 8 sec.
weight measurement. Blink starts
with READ closure; measurement,
upon release.

CHIME

CHIME signals completion of PATIENT
PLUS UNKNOWN TARE WEIGHT measure-
ment.

M/A U
+P+ΔT
HOLDS 10
Sec.

PATIENT PLUS UNKNOWN TARE is displayed for 10 sec., or until cancelled by READ or SET. UNITS may still be changed, converting display on closure, re-starting 10 sec. timer on release.

MODE and ALARM may be set during display without having an effect on the procedure.

DURING DISPLAY
HOLD ZERO

M/A U
+P.W.

DISPLAY converts upon closure, to initial PATIENT WEIGHT from memory.

TOUCH READ

TARE increment, $\Delta T = (P + \Delta T) - (P.W.)$, is added to TOTAL SYSTEM TARE and displayed upon closure of READ

RELEASE ZERO

M/A U
+T.SY.T.f
HOLDS 10
Sec.

ADJUSTED TOTAL SYSTEM TARE, including tare change ΔT , is displayed 10 sec. after release, or until cancelled by READ or SET. UNITS change converts display on closure; restarts 10 sec. timer on release. MODE and ALARM may be set during display.

WEIGH PATIENT

TOUCH READ

+ U

DISPLAY blinks "+" and "KG" or "LB", as previously set, during 5 to 8 sec. weight measurement. Blink starts with READ closure; measurement, upon release.

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CHIME

CHIME signals completion of PATIENT WEIGHT measurement.

M/A U
+P.W.
HOLDS 10
Sec.

PATIENT WEIGHT is displayed for 10 sec., or until cancelled by READ or SET, at which time it bumps into memory.

TOUCH UNITS

RESTARTS
10 Sec.

UNITS change converts display on closure; restarts 10 sec. timer on release. MODE and ALARM may be set during display.

HOLD DISPLAY

HOLD UNITS
RELEASE UNITS

M/A U
+P.W.
HOLDS 10
Sec.

Units system will change with first touch; change back with second operation; will hold indefinitely if switch is held activated.

DISPLAY holds 10 sec. after release, or until cancelled by READ or SET.

MEMORY RECALL

HOLD SET

M/A U
+AL'M.WT

Existing alarm weight value is displayed including ALARM and MODE status and weight UNITS. DISPLAY converts if UNITS are changed.

ACTIVATE READ

M/A U
+P.W.

DISPLAY converts upon closure, to last value of weight bumped into memory during weight measurement or automatic monitoring mode (WT+ or WT-)

		<u>RELEASE READ</u>	M/A U ±AL'M WT	DISPLAY converts back to existing alarm weight value.
		<u>RELEASE SET</u>		DISPLAY disappears instantly; weighing cycle is <u>not</u> initiated.
MONITORING SETUP		<u>HOLD SET</u>	M/A U ±AL'M WT	Existing alarm weight value is displayed, including <u>ALARM</u> and <u>MODE</u> status and weight <u>UNITS</u>
		<u>SET MODE: EXIT</u> WT-, WT+, or OFF	M/A U ±AL'M WT	<u>MODE</u> setting steps sequentially with each touch of the key, whenever display is present, or will roll at 1/2 sec. per step if held for 1 sec.
		<u>SET ALARM: SILENT</u> <u>LOCAL</u> , or <u>REMOTE</u>	M/A U ±AL'M WT	<u>ALARM</u> setting steps sequentially with each touch of the key, whenever display is present, or will roll at 1/2 sec. per step if held for 1 sec.
		<u>CHECK UNITS</u>	M/A U ±AL'M WT	DISPLAY converts if units are changed.
		<u>ENTER ALARM WEIGHT</u>	M/A U ±AL'M WT	DISPLAY increments with each key touch; rolls upward at 1/2 sec. per step without decade carryover if digit stepping key is held for 1 sec. Hundreds digit rolls +0, +1, +2, +3, +4, -4, -3, -2, -1, -0, +0 etc.

	(RECALL MEMORY DURING SETUP)	ACTIVATE <u>READ</u>	M/A U +P.W.	DISPLAY converts upon closure, to last value of weight bumped into memory during weight measurement or automatic monitoring mode (WT- or WT+)
		<u>RELEASE READ</u>	M/A U +AL'M WT	DISPLAY converts, upon release, back to ALARM WEIGHT value
		<u>RELEASE SET</u>		After <u>MODE</u> , <u>ALARM</u> , and <u>ALARM WEIGHT</u> settings have been completed (in any sequence), releasing <u>SET</u> blanks DISPLAY instantly.
	RECALL ALARM WT	<u>HOLD SET</u>	M/A U +AL'M WT	Existing ALARM WEIGHT value is displayed, including <u>ALARM</u> and <u>MODE</u> status and preset weight <u>UNITS</u> .
		<u>RELEASE SET</u>		DISPLAY blanks instantly.
	SHUT OFF ALARM	<u>TOUCH MODE</u>	M	<u>MODE</u> setting blinks in display when alarm occurs; alarm clears with single touch of <u>MODE</u> key. To reset, condition must be cleared and <u>MODE</u> reset as above.

The control system admits of the possibility of making an initial setting that eliminates the bed tare and the patient's weight. Thus, the display will provide a continuous display of the change in patient's weight. It will be appreciated that while the preferred embodiment of the invention is described in connection with hospital beds, the invention may be adapted for use in connection with other forms of weighing apparatus.

such as patient supporting wheelchairs, livestock scales, or the like.

From the above disclosure of the general principles of the present invention and the preceding detailed description of a preferred embodiment, those skilled in the art will readily comprehend the various modifications to which the present invention is susceptible. Therefore, we desire to be limited only by the scope of the following claims and equivalents thereof.

Claims

10 1. A hospital bed characterised by comprising:

a base (10),

a support frame (16) mounted on said base (10),

a weigh frame (30) disposed above said support frame (16),

a plurality of load beams (35) connecting said weigh frame (30) to said support frame (16),

15 and means (58,60) for monitoring changes in weight on said weigh frame (30) as detected by said load beams (35).

2. A hospital bed as claimed in claim 1, characterised by further comprising:

a patient supporting surface (66) consisting of a plurality of panels (67,68,69,70) serially connected to each other by hinge joints,

20 means (72,76) mounted on said weigh frame for articulating said panels (67,68,69,70) with respect to each other,

and a source of power (79) for said articulating means mounted on said base (10), means (77,78) connecting said power (79) to said articulating means (72,76), thereby minimizing any binding connection between the base (10) and the weigh frame (30).

25 3. A hospital bed as claimed in claim 1, characterised by further comprising:

a patient supporting surface (66) consisting of a plurality of panels (67,68,69,70) serially connected to each other by hinge joints,

hydraulic means (72,76) mounted on said weigh frame for articulating said panels (67,68,69,70) with respect to each other,

30 and a source of hydraulic fluid (79) and hoses (77,78) mounted on said base (10), said hoses (77,78) being connected to said hydraulic means (72,76), thereby minimizing any binding connection between the base (10) and the weigh frame (30).

4. A hospital bed as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, characterised in that:

said support frame (16) projects longitudinally beyond said weigh frame (30), and

35 said projecting portions (33,34) of said support frame (16) support accessories such as drainage bags and IV bags free of weigh frame.

5. A hospital bed as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, characterised in that each load beam (35) connection between said support frame (16) and said bed frame comprises:

a load beam (35) fixed at one end to said support frame (16),

40 and a swivel connection (40,42,43,44,45,46,47) between the other end of said beam and said weigh frame (30), whereby said weigh frame (30) has freedom of movement in any direction in a horizontal plane.

6. A hospital bed as claimed in claim 5, characterised in that said swivel connection comprises:

a plate (50) fixed to said weigh frame,

a post (44,45) projecting vertically above said plate (50),

45 a universal ball connection (46,47) between the lower end of said post and said plate,

and a universal ball connection (40,42,43) between the upper end of said post and said load beam (35).

7. A hospital bed characterised by comprising:

a base (10),

50 a rectangular support frame (16) mounted on said base (10), said support frame (16) being rectangular in cross section,

a rectangular weigh frame (30) overlying said support frame (16) and being of an inverted U-shape in cross-section,

said support frame (16) being nested within said weigh frame (30),

55 a load cell (35) at each of the four corner portions of said frame connecting said weigh frame (30) to said support frame (16).

8. A hospital bed as claimed in claim 7, characterised by further comprising:
each load beam (35) being fixed at one end to said support frame (16) and cantilevered from it to provide a free end (39),

and a swivel connection (40,42,43,44,45,46,47) between said free end (39) of said beam (35) and said frame.

9. Control and readout apparatus for a weigh apparatus having a weigh frame (30) supported by at least one load cell (35) on a support frame (16), characterised in that the control/readout apparatus (60) is operatively connected to said load cell (35) and comprises:

a display (80) for weight data,

control means including keys for entering weight units connected between said load cell (35) and said display (80),

said control means for entering and displaying tare weight and changing tare when an unknown change in tare occurs,

and for displaying the weight of a load supported by said weigh frame.

10. Control and readout apparatus as claimed in claim 9, characterised by further comprising:

a READ switch (90) for producing a display of the load's weight,

a ZERO switch (91) for initiating automatic zero tare on an unloaded weigh frame and activating said keys for entry of known change in tare.

11. Control and readout apparatus as claimed in claim 9 or 10, characterised by further comprising:

means for initiating an alarm at a central station when a load is removed from said weigh frame.

12. Control and readout apparatus as claimed in claim 11, characterised by further comprising:

an ALARM switch (83) for programming the following alarm types:

Silent: flashing LED on readout unit

Local: flashing LED Plus audio beep on readout unit

Remote: audio beep transmitted to central station.

13. Control and readout apparatus as claimed in any one of claims 9 to 12, characterised by further comprising:

a SET switch (92) for activating said display to show alarm weight and to activate keys for setting or changing existing alarm weight value,

a MODE switch (82) for sequencing said control means through "exit" weight, "over" weight, and "under" weight,

and an alarm that is activated when any of said preset mode conditions occur.

14. A control and readout apparatus as claimed in any one of claims 9 to 13 for a weigh apparatus, characterised in that said weigh apparatus is part of a hospital bed and said load is a patient.

15. A weigh apparatus characterised by comprising:

a base (10),

a support frame (16) mounted on said base,

a weigh frame (30) disposed above said support frame (16),

a plurality of load beams (35) connecting said weigh frame (30) to said support frame (16), and

means (58,60) for monitoring changes in weight on said weigh frame (30) as detected by said load means,

wherein each load beam connection between said support frame (16) and said weigh frame (30) comprises:

a load beam (35) fixed at one end to said support frame (16),

and a swivel connection (40,42,43,44,45,46,47) between the other end (39) of said beam (35) and said weigh frame (30), whereby said weigh frame (30) has freedom of movement in any direction in a horizontal

plane.

16. A weigh apparatus as claimed in claim 14, characterised in that said swivel connection comprises:

a plate (50) fixed to said weigh frame (30),

a post (44,45) projecting vertically above said plate (50),

a universal ball connection (46,47) between the lower end (45) of said post (44,45) and said plate (50),

and a universal ball connection (40,42,43) between the upper end (44) of said post (44,45) and said load beam (35).

17. A weigh apparatus characterised by comprising:

a base (10),

a rectangular support frame (16) mounted on said base (10), said support frame (16) being rectangular in cross-section,

a rectangular weigh frame (30) overlying said support frame (16) and being of an inverted U-shape in cross-section,

said support frame (16) being nested within said weigh frame (30), and
a load cell (35) at each of the four corner portions of said frame connecting said weigh frame (30) to said
support frame (16).

18. A weigh apparatus as claimed in claim 16, characterised in that each load beam (35) is fixed at one
5 end to said support frame (16) and cantilevered from it to provide a free end (39), and
a swivel connection (40,42,43,44,45,46,47) between said free end (39) of said beam (35) and said frame.

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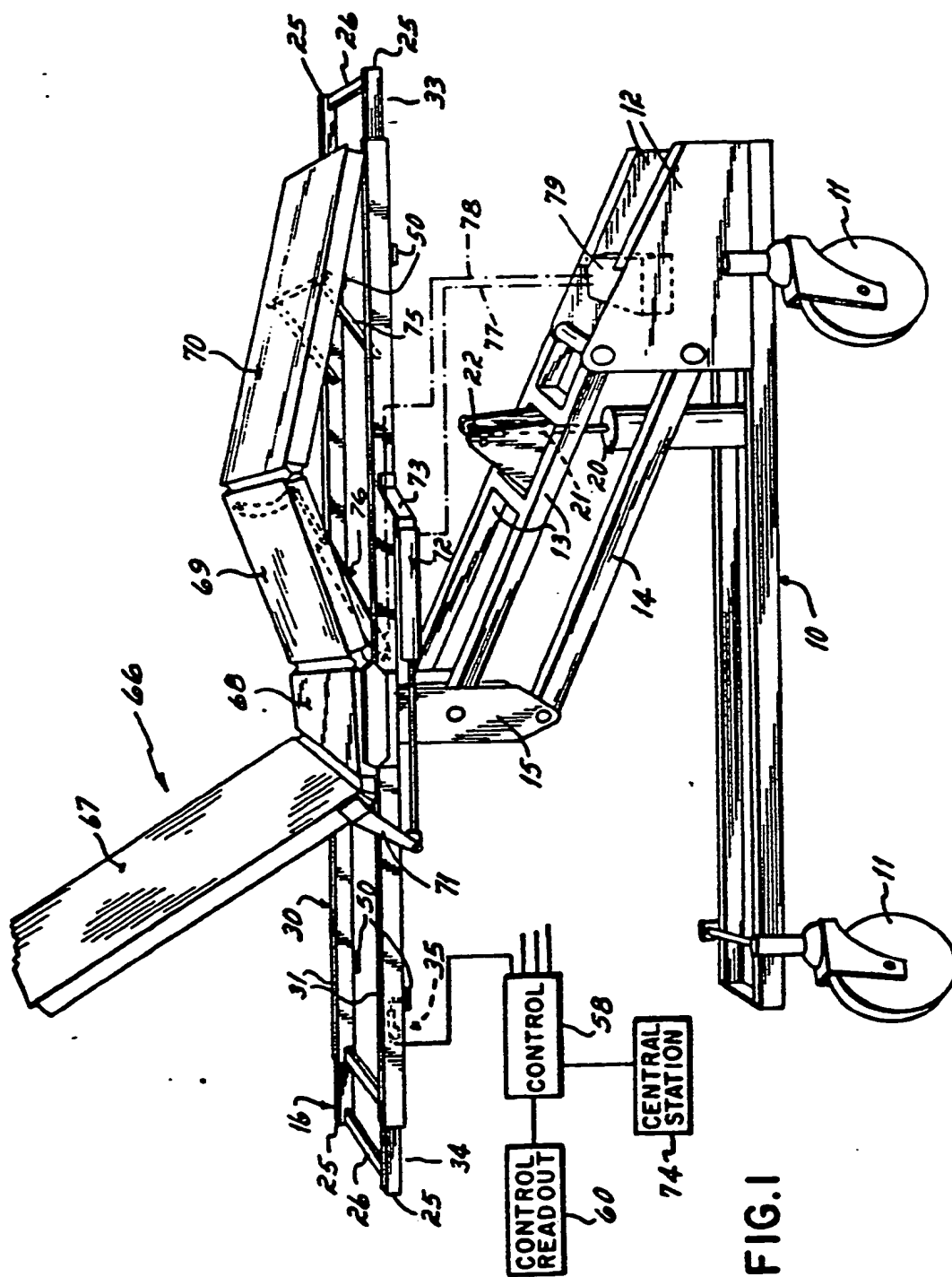
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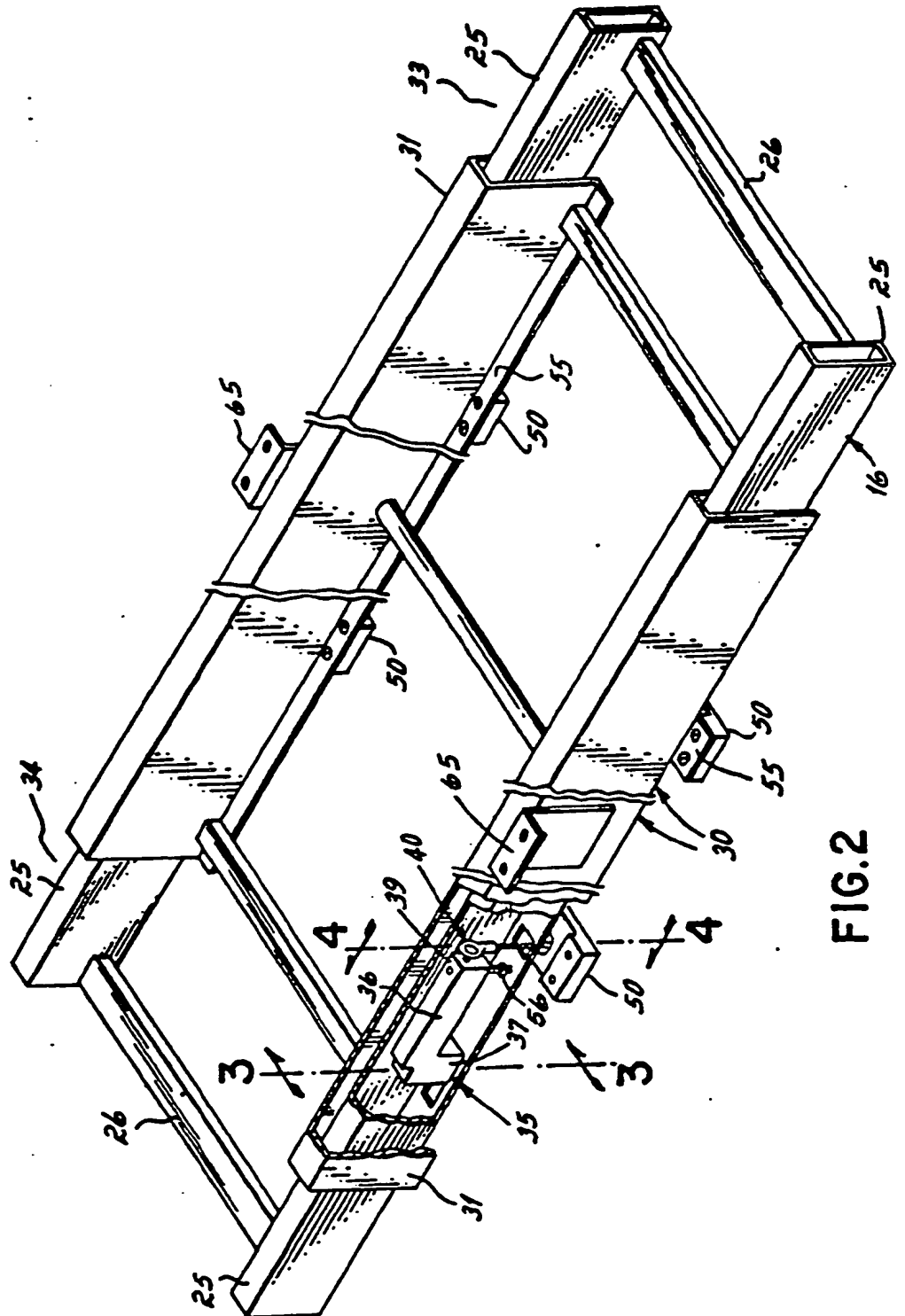
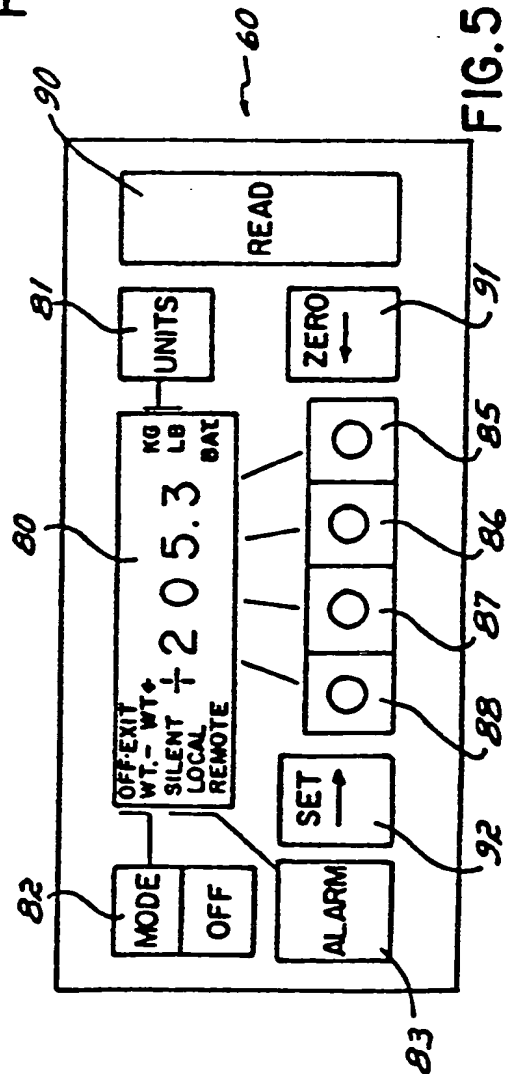
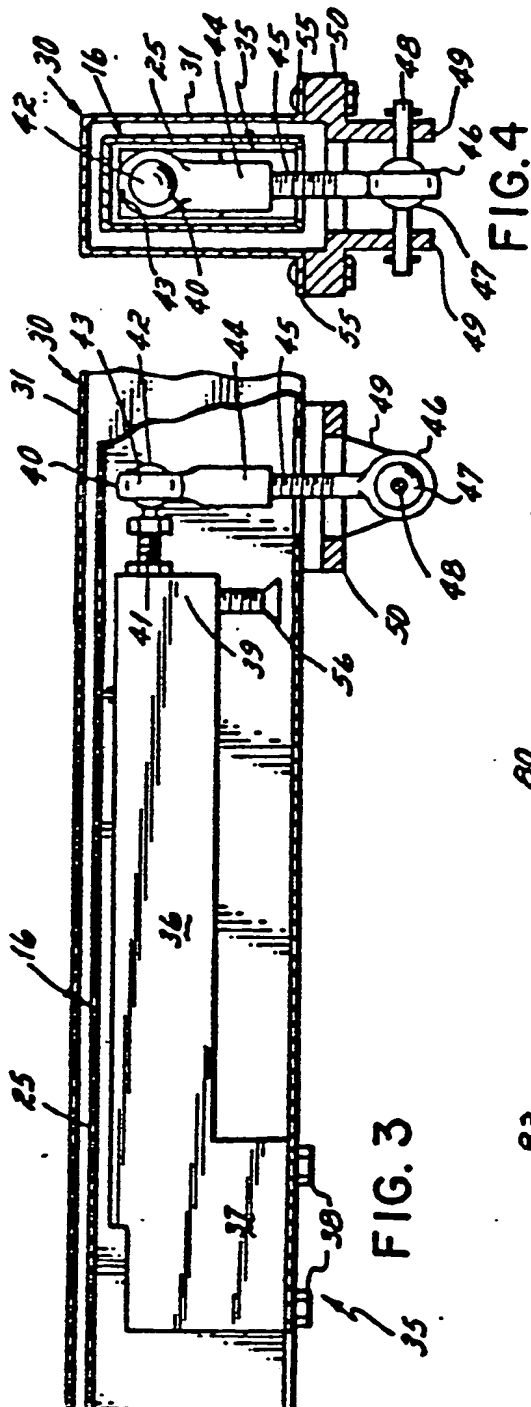


FIG.2



(19)



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(54) Hospital bed for weighing patients.

(57) A weigh apparatus, preferably part of a hospital bed, has a support frame (16) and a weigh frame (30) mounted on the support frame by load cells (35). Means (58,60) for monitoring changes in weight

is provided. The output of the load cells is summed to provide a reading of the total weight on the weigh frame. The tare weight is subtracted to provide the weight of the load, e.g. the patient.

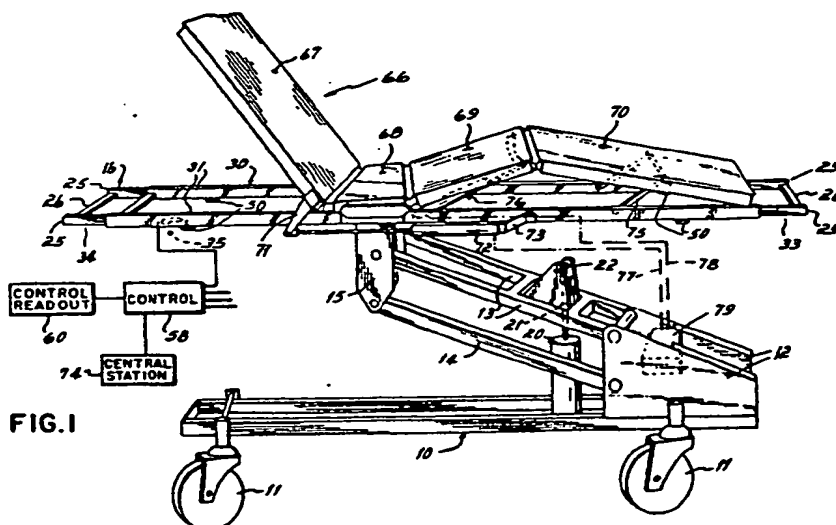


FIG. 1

EP 0 322 994 A3

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int Cl 4)
X	US-A-4 669 136 (J.B. WATERS et al.) * Column 3, lines 12-43, 53-65; column 4, lines 7-28; column 5, lines 13-49; figures 1,2,4,7,8 *	— 1-3,7	G 01 G 19/44 G 01 G 21/18 A 61 G 7/00
Y	--	5,6,8	
Y	FR-A-2 454 615 (BIZERBA WERKE WILHELM KRAUT KG) * Page 4, line 36 - page 5, line 13; figure 3 *	5,6,8	
A	US-A-3 360 062 (J.A. POTTER) * Column 1, lines 14-21; colum 2, lines 55-63; column 3, line 58 - column 4, line 3; figures 3,4 *	1	
A	EP-A-0 064 408 (B.L. SWERSEY) * Page 2, lines 15-18; claims 1,2 *	1	G 01 G A 61 G
A	SU-A- 773 445 (LUKOMSKII et al.) * Abstract *	1	
A	DE-A-2 610 204 (KERWIT MEDICAL PRODUCTS, INC.) * Claim 1; figure 6 *	1-3	
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 22-12-1989	Examiner GANCI
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS		T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document	
X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document			



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CLAIMS INCURRING FEES

The present European patent application comprised at the time of filing more than ten claims.

- ☐ All claims fees have been paid within the prescribed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for all claims.
- ☐ Only part of the claims fees have been paid within the prescribed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for the first ten claims and for those claims for which claims fees have been paid.
- namely claims:
- ☐ No claims fees have been paid within the prescribed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for the first ten claims.

X LACK OF UNITY OF INVENTION

The Search Division considers that the present European patent application does not comply with the requirement of unity of invention and relates to several inventions or groups of inventions.

namely:

1. Claims 1-8: Hospital bed having load beam between weigh and support frame with means for monitoring changes in weight.
2. Claims 9-14: Control/readant apparatus for a balance having means for entering and displaying tare weight and changing tare.
3. Claims 15-18: Weigh apparatus with a swivel connection between load beam and weigh frame.

- ☐ All further search fees have been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for all claims.
- ☐ Only part of the further search fees have been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for those parts of the European patent application which relate to the inventions in respect of which search fees have been paid.
- namely claims:
- ☒ None of the further search fees has been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for those parts of the European patent application which relate to the invention first mentioned in the claims.

namely claims: 1-8

